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Secretariat

19 November 2014

Information circular*

To: Members of the staff

From: The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management

Subject: **Recent developments concerning the response of the Government of the United States of America to the Ebola epidemic: exit and entry screening of travellers**

1. The purpose of this circular is to inform staff members of a diplomatic note from the Unites States Mission to the United Nations regarding the recent developments concerning the host Government's response. The note also includes a statement by the United States Department of Homeland Security on travel restrictions and protective measures.

2. The note informs the United Nations that the United States of America is implementing measures aimed at responding to and containing the Ebola virus, within the United States and globally. This includes enhanced entry screening at certain international airports, including at New York John F. Kennedy and Newark Liberty airports. This screening includes, among other measures, a questionnaire, temperature measuring and observation for symptoms of Ebola. Where the traveller has a fever or other symptoms, or has been exposed to Ebola, the traveller will be referred for further evaluation. The note also refers to the exit screening applied when travelling from affected countries. This measure aims to identify sick travellers and those exposed to Ebola. Travellers may be delayed from boarding an airplane until it is safe to travel.

3. The full text of the note is included in annex I to the present circular. The statement is included in annex II. All staff should familiarize themselves with these measures and expect their application as relevant to their circumstances and travel plans.

* The present circular will be in effect until further notice.

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Annex I

Diplomatic note dated 24 October 2014 from the United States Mission to the United Nations

The United States Mission to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Permanent Missions to the United Nations and to the United Nations Secretariat and wishes to bring to their attention recent developments concerning the host country Government's response to the Ebola epidemic.

The United States Government is implementing measures aimed at responding to and containing the Ebola virus, both within the United States and globally. The health and safety of the members of the United Nations community, who are in frequent contact with persons coming from all parts of the world, is very important to the host country. As a result, the United States Mission seeks to ensure that the Permanent Missions, the United Nations and their members are aware of these efforts and the coordinated resources that are being used to counter the threat of Ebola. Such efforts require the participation of, and coordination with, all segments of society, including the United Nations community in New York.

The full range of relevant United States Government agencies, including the Department of State, the United States Agency for International Development, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Department of Defense and the Department of Homeland Security, are increasing every possible form of assistance to the affected countries, their citizens and the international organizations responding to the outbreak. This assistance includes equipment and other essential supplies, public health messaging efforts and medical and technical expertise.

In the coming weeks, the United States Mission will, as necessary, continue to provide the Permanent Missions and the Secretariat with information about measures initiated within the United States that may impact the United Nations community.

Screening on entry into the United States

The United States Government enhanced measures at international airports and other ports of entry into the United States to identify sick travellers with possible contagious diseases, and put into place new measures to specifically address the Ebola virus. The Government is conducting enhanced entry screening at certain international airports, including New York John F. Kennedy and Newark Liberty airports. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and United States Customs and Border Protection have assigned representatives to each airport to respond to any reports of ill travellers, and the host country's robust public health system is prepared to respond and assist. Such programmes have also been put in place at Washington Dulles, Chicago O'Hare and Atlanta Hartsfield airports.

For this purpose, enhanced screenings into the United States will proceed as follows:

1. A representative of the United States Customs and Border Protection will give each traveller health information that includes: (a) information about Ebola; (b) symptoms to look for and what to do if symptoms develop; and (c) information for doctors if travellers need to seek medical attention.

2. Travellers will undergo screening measures to include: (a) a questionnaire used to determine potential risk; (b) have their temperature taken; and (c) be observed for other symptoms of Ebola.

3. If a traveller has a fever or other symptoms or has been exposed to Ebola, the United States Customs and Border Protection will refer the traveller to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for further evaluation. The Centers will determine whether the traveller: (a) can continue to travel; (b) is taken to a hospital for evaluation, testing and treatment; or (c) is referred to a local health department for further monitoring and support.

Entry screening is part of a layered approach. When used with other public health measures, entry screening can strengthen global efforts to battle the Ebola virus. To safeguard public health, this approach will be applied consistently regardless of visa status. The United States Mission encourages the Permanent Missions and the Secretariat to share this information with their personnel as well as officials who will be visiting the United States.

Exit screening in countries experiencing Ebola outbreaks

Since the beginning of August 2014, the host country Government has been working with airlines, airports, ministries of health and other partners to provide technical assistance to countries with Ebola outbreaks. The United States has helped affected countries to conduct exit screening of departing travellers. Exit screenings are conducted at airports in these outbreak-affected areas to look for sick travellers or travellers exposed to Ebola and to delay them from boarding an airplane until it is safe to travel. The United States continues to support and strengthen exit screening in these countries using United States Government personnel, protocols and educational materials.

In conjunction with other agencies of the host country Government, the United States Mission will be happy to provide the Permanent Missions and the Secretariat with information about measures initiated within the United States that may impact the United Nations community.

Annex II

Statement by the Secretary of Homeland Security on travel restrictions and protective measures to prevent the spread of Ebola to the United States

21 October 2014

Today, as part of the Department of Homeland Security's ongoing response to prevent the spread of Ebola to the United States, we are announcing travel restrictions in the form of additional screening and protective measures at our ports of entry for travellers from the three West African Ebola-affected countries. These new measures will go into effect tomorrow.

Last week, with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Department of Homeland Security implemented enhanced screening measures at five airports around the country — New York's John F. Kennedy, Newark, Dulles, Atlanta and Chicago. Passengers flying into one of these airports from flights originating in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea are subject to secondary screening and added protocols, including having their temperature taken, before they can be admitted into the United States. These airports account for about 94 per cent of travellers flying to the United States from these countries. At present there are no direct, non-stop commercial flights from Liberia, Sierra Leone or Guinea to any airport in the United States.

Today, I am announcing that all passengers arriving in the United States whose travel originates in Liberia, Sierra Leone or Guinea will be required to fly into one of the five airports that have the enhanced screening and additional resources in place. We are working closely with the airlines to implement these restrictions with minimal travel disruption. If not already handled by the airlines, the few impacted travellers should contact the airlines for rebooking, as needed.

We currently have in place measures to identify and screen anyone at all land, sea and air ports of entry into the United States who we have reason to believe has been present in Liberia, Sierra Leone or Guinea in the preceding 21 days.